

which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5105, H.R. 3124 and H.R. 1402.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM HON.
NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC
LEADER

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
Washington, DC, September 28, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 1012(c)(1) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 42 U.S.C. 242b note, I hereby appoint Mr. Thomas M. Priselac of Los Angeles, California, to the Commission On Systemic Interoperability.

Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, several of my colleagues and I journeyed to Baghdad and returned, and I would just like to make a few observations. Obviously, this is a very intense time in Iraq as the elections approaches, but I had three observations that I think were somewhat meaningful.

Number one, we were tremendously impressed by the morale and the attitude of our soldiers. One would say, well, how in the world could that be? It is 110, 115 degrees every day, body armor, helmets, very difficult work, some danger, considerable distance from family. I guess the main reason that we felt we were observing this was there seemed to be a very strong sense of mission, a very strong sense of purpose and accomplishment.

One thing that I often heard from the soldiers was this: they said, you know, it seems like there are two wars over here. There is the one that we see on CNN: we see the IEDs, individual explosive devices; we see the car bombs; we see the beheadings.

But the part of the story that we think is meaningful is not being told.

They said, the thing that we see is that in education, 2,500 schools have been renovated, 30,000 teachers have been trained, there is an 80 percent increase in attendance in schools, and most of that is girls who have not been going to school at all under Saddam Hussein. Health care, 240 hospitals operating, 1,000 clinics, 90 percent of the children are currently vaccinated, and this again is something that had not occurred before.

So health care has improved. Infrastructure is getting better. Water supply, power, sewage. It still needs improvement, but it is doing better, and of course the provisional government and the June 30 hand-off. So what they were saying is please make sure the people in the United States understand that there is more going on than what many times they are hearing about.

The second thing that I thought was somewhat optimistic is that the Iraqis are providing more and more security. The goal is to train 270,000 Iraqis; 135,000 police; 100,000 Army and National Guard; and then 32,000 border guards. Right now we are a little bit more than halfway there. We are making excellent progress.

So in Najef, not long ago, Iraqi troops led the charge and, along with Ayatola Sustani, calmed a very dangerous situation. So we see progressively more and more operations with Iraqis taking the lead.

The third thing that I would say that was very encouraging to me is that in talking to the Iraqis, they very much want the elections. If the Iraqis do not care or if they do not want elections, then obviously the whole thing that we are doing is for naught. I talked to an Iraqi woman today and I asked her, I said, are the Iraqis willing to line up and take the risk on Election Day, and she said, without question we will have a tremendous turnout.

So Prime Minister Allawi told us last week, and this was confirmed on our trip, that roughly 15 out of 18 provinces are sufficiently secure right now to maintain elections, and the other two or three are coming around. Splinter groups who have been primarily terrorist-oriented in the past are now becoming politically active. They are beginning to realize that if they do not become part of the political process, they are going to be left out. So a lot of things are changing very rapidly. Iraqi women will tell you this, that they see their future as being much brighter. So when there is hope, I think there is a good chance.

So if we pull out, as many are currently advising, we will tell the families of the 1,000 soldiers we have lost that they have died in vain, and I do not think we can afford to do that. Secondly, we will have broken our promise to the Iraqis. We have told them that we will absolutely not do that, and many of them have trusted us. So if we pull out now, literally tens of thousands of Iraqis are going to lose their lives and will be sacrificed because of our duplicity.

Thirdly, I think if we show vulnerability as a Nation; and if we show that we do not have resolve and that we will not see something through, and if terrorists can steer our agenda here, we become more and more vulnerable to terrorist activities. So I do not think that we can afford to do this.

So at this point, as I see it, and I think some of those who were on the trip would also say that the only viable exit strategy is to win. When we say to win, we mean that we will stay the course until the Iraqis themselves are able to secure their country and be able to govern their country. This is not going to be easy, but we think it is doable. We were encouraged by what we saw.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY AND IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration loves to tout George W. Bush's willingness to stay the course as the source of his strength as a President. Day after day, the President and his surrogates use this "resolve" to demonstrate why he should be reelected.

The sad truth is that President Bush's resolve amounts to little more than a campaign tool to disguise the fact that his administration's policies have increasingly made Americans far less safe in the world. The President's resolve is actually nothing more than his attempt to lead our Nation while wearing blinders.

President Bush failed to demonstrate resolve in fighting terrorism in the days before the September 11 terrorist attack. In fact, he vacationed at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, for the entire month of August in the year 2001, neglecting to act on his daily intelligence briefings which specifically warned against terrorists crashing planes into large city buildings.

Since September 11, President Bush has continued to fail in his resolve to fight international terrorism. Despite a promise to apprehend Osama bin Laden, dead or alive, President Bush actually pulled troops out of Afghanistan in the year 2002. This grave error

allowed the al Qaeda leader to flee to the shadowy hinterlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Early in 2002, with bin Laden still on the loose, President Bush turned his attention to Iraq. Citing the threat of Iraq's nuclear weapons program and Saddam Hussein's links to al Qaeda, Bush marshaled a war resolution through Congress.

Resolve, however, was not enough to win the support of the United Nations; so our President, determined to stop Iraq's supposed nuclear threat, went to Iraq with the support of only a loose and fragmented coalition of other countries.

Since the beginning of the war in Iraq, no weapons of mass destruction have been found and no evidence has ever linked Saddam Hussein to al Qaeda. Still, the President's handlers point to his resolve as a source of strength. Strength for whom? The terrorists who have escaped from America's grasp as we shamefully turned our attention to Iraq? The leaders of Iran and North Korea who continue to develop the deadliest weapons known to man? Resolve, as thousands of insurgents savagely attack our soldiers and Iraqi civilians? Resolve, as more than 1,000 American soldiers and at least 13,000 innocent Iraqi civilians are killed in Iraq? And let us not forget about the more than 7,000 U.S. soldiers who have been gravely wounded. Where is the resolve to protect our troops?

I, for one, am sick and tired of the White House calling it resolve when President Bush continues to focus on Iraq at the expense of other, more important issues.

Today the House voted to reallocate \$3.4 billion of last year's \$18.4 billion supplemental, using it for military purposes instead of for Iraq's reconstruction. So now we are forced to pilfer money that is supposed to pay for infrastructure needs for the Iraqi people.

This, after spending less than \$2 billion of the \$18.4 billion allocated for Iraq's reconstruction in the first place. I do not consider that resolve; I consider it malignant neglect of an entire country's needs.

There has to be a better way to handle the quagmire in Iraq. That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, a SMART security platform for the 21st century. SMART stands for Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism.

SMART security treats war as an absolute last resort. It fights terrorism with stronger intelligence and multilateral partnerships, and it controls the spread of weapons of mass destruction with aggressive diplomacy, strong regional security arrangements, and vigorous inspection regimes.

If we had pursued a SMART security strategy in the first place, America would not be embroiled in this violent situation in Iraq. Let us not forget that Saddam Hussein did not have a nuclear weapons program and Iraq did not have ties to al Qaeda. Instead of blindly fo-

cusing our country's resources on a conflict that has nothing to do with American security, President Bush should take off his blinders and focus on the real threats to our country.

How can we be secure if our public schools are failing our children and 40 million Americans lack health insurance? How can we be secure when our President's shameful tax cuts force our children to repay America's debt for the next several decades?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE JUDGES OF MADISON COUNTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, the previous speaker makes me want to spend my next few minutes talking about another subject. I guess what I need to do is just totally say that I am sorry to be in the same room with some of those remarks, but I will stay on my subject tonight, because I rise tonight to begin a discussion of the "number one Judicial Hellhole" for 2003, as named by the American Tort Reform Association.

A year ago, prior to a long list of complaints I received from Georgia companies, I had never heard of the place known as Madison County, Illinois. Now that has changed within the last year; and from the facts that I have heard, it seems that the judges of all people of Madison county regularly apply the civil laws in an unfair manner and violate the fundamental constitutional rights of defendants, particularly those that hail from other States. One might wonder why a person from Georgia would be complaining about judges in Illinois. Well, the reason is they are affecting my constituents and the citizens of my State.

Madam Speaker, I could not sit on these complaints from good Georgia companies any longer. I sent a letter to Attorney General Ashcroft on September 10 asking for a formal investigation of Madison County.

Little did I know that this letter would send the attorneys of Madison County into complete temper tantrums. It should. They are guilty of lining their pockets at the expense of their clients. Yes, at the expense of their clients. And perhaps, Madam Speaker, one of the most guilty is Randall Bono.

Mr. Bono's law firm, Simmons-Cooper, generated over \$1 billion in settlements in 2003. Somewhere between 30 to 40 percent of those settlements were

kept by that firm. The public service that Mr. Bono has offered in his career includes two lawsuits against Ameritech. He walked away with \$16 million. His clients each got a \$5 phone card.

Contrary to the comments Mr. Bono made during his tantrum, my only motivation is to protect the companies of Georgia from frivolous lawsuits. Not only do those frivolous lawsuits triple car insurance rates for the people living in and around Madison County, they also send doctors fleeing from the region and, of the greatest concern to me, they force American companies to close up shops and take good American jobs overseas to avoid such harassments.

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These kind of illegal shenanigans do cause outsourcing of jobs. We are all suffering, and for what? To line the pockets of lawyers like Bono?

The letter I sent to Attorney General Ashcroft is five and a half pages full of cases where defendants' constitutional rights to due process have been violated. I can take all night reviewing them, and I will outline them over the coming weeks. However, what I want to outline here is a possible reason why Madison County has become such a judicial hellhole.

Between 1980 and 2002, 90 percent of the contributions made to Madison County judicial candidates came from plaintiffs' lawyers. Judges have received tens of thousands of dollars in contributions, even in the years that they are unopposed. Several plaintiffs' firms with no Madison County office have contributed money to Madison County judicial campaigns.

Madam Speaker, I have a strong belief that when Attorney General Ashcroft looks into the situation in Madison County, he is going to find that the cases I have outlined are just the tip of the iceberg.

I take it very personally when judges try to legislate from the bench. I take it even more personally when they overreach their power and steal from good companies in Georgia.

This will be an ongoing thing, Madam Speaker. I will report to my colleagues every night of how we are doing in the hellhole of the United States, Madison County, where the judges and plaintiffs' lawyers are stealing from the people.

NAMING POST OFFICES SHOULD NOT TAKE PRIORITY OVER BASIC CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague beforehand who spoke, and I am pleased to be here in the chamber when he did.